



Newsletter No.6: July 2026

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- Internet and other News articles - Monthly Blooper
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- Shop details – sell swap, shop, and coffee
- Web site: <https://beesnorth.com.au/contact-us/>

Next Meeting: **Sunday 19 July**
2pm start
Hermit Park State School

Entry via McKimmin Road gate
Bring a comfy chair

Tea, coffee, milk available
Stay and have a chat after the meeting

QBA Conference 2026 Report by Blake Steward

TDBAI supported Clubbie Blake Steward at the recent conference, and he was extremely diligent and thorough at reporting back to us with his summary of the proceedings. The Newsletter will carry 2 Episodes of Blake's summaries. Here is Part 1

Opening

The conference opened with an Acknowledgement of Country, followed by Councillor Steve Cooper officially welcoming delegates on behalf of the Bundaberg Regional Council. He highlighted the region's strong agricultural heritage and the essential role bees play in supporting crops, biodiversity, and healthy ecosystems. Cooper emphasised that beekeepers are often the first to notice environmental changes, giving them a valuable perspective on climate and land-use challenges. He noted ongoing industry pressures such as biosecurity risks, environmental change, and the need to maintain healthy bee populations. The Deputy Mayor praised the Queensland Beekeepers Association for its long history of advocacy, education, and member support. He encouraged delegates to explore the Wide Bay region and attend the upcoming Beekeepers Field Day at the Bundaberg Showgrounds. A wide range of sponsors were acknowledged for their contributions to the event. Housekeeping reminders covered filming, Q&A procedures, mobile phone etiquette, venue facilities, and emergency exits. The new secretary, Alex McLennan, was introduced and thanked for her significant organisational work. The session concluded with apologies, a remembrance for life member Pete Kelly, acceptance of reports, and the election of the new management committee.

AgriFutures AUS National Update

Luke Evans from AgriFutures Australia introduced himself and outlined his role in supporting the honeybee and pollination sector. He explained that AgriFutures invests in research, development, and extension (RDE) to improve productivity, profitability, and sustainability for Australian beekeepers. Evans clarified how the levy system works, noting that commercial beekeepers contribute funding that is matched by the Australian Government. He described the new five-year RDE plan, developed through consultation with beekeepers and industry groups, which sets the priorities for future investment. Evans also outlined the structure of the AgriFutures advisory panel and encouraged attendees to apply for the four open positions. He highlighted several current research projects, including work by John Roberts on imported honey and virus transmission, and studies on imported semen and deformed wing virus. Another major project involves developing antibody-based vaccines for bee viruses using chicken-egg technology. Evans briefly listed additional newly contracted projects and encouraged attendees to speak directly with the researchers present at the conference. He also noted government-funded cross-industry initiatives, including feasibility work on national traceability and research into varroa's impact on food security. Evans closed by urging beekeepers to share their challenges and research ideas, emphasising that the most impactful projects are those co-designed with industry.

Australian Honeybee Industry Council Update

Danny Le Feuvre, CEO of AHBIC, outlined the organisation's national role representing the honeybee and pollination industry on issues including biosecurity, policy, and industry advocacy. He explained AHBIC's federated structure, where state associations, such as the Queensland Beekeepers Association, feed issues upward for national decision-making. Le Feuvre highlighted the board's mix of beekeepers, researchers, and supply-chain representatives, noting that AHBIC's work is guided by these members rather than by staff alone. A major focus of recent months has been chemical resistance, with AHBIC partnering with the Queensland Government and QBA to organise an emergency roundtable aimed at securing stronger government support. He clarified how emergency use permits and full chemical registrations work, emphasising that AHBIC can advocate but cannot influence APVMA decisions.

Le Feuvre also provided an update on imported honey, explaining AHBIC's multi-pronged approach involving biosecurity testing, anti-dumping investigations, and supermarket-shelf sampling. Recent government testing confirmed adulteration in some imported honey, prompting commitments to strengthen border testing protocols. He reported positive biosecurity outcomes, including successful eradication progress for red dwarf honeybees and Asian honeybees in separate incursions. Le Feuvre then outlined proposed levy reforms, noting that current levy income is insufficient to maintain essential programs such as surveillance and residue testing. He closed by discussing the national colony loss survey, now funded through AgriFutures, and encouraged beekeepers to participate so the industry can present accurate, credible data to government.

Honeybee Pesticide-Parasite interactions – Varroa Destructor

Jeff Williams, a Canadian researcher now based in the southeastern United States, shared insights from his global work in beekeeping and bee health. He spoke about the strong beekeeping cultures he experienced in places like Switzerland and the value of international collaboration. Williams introduced his research on neonicotinoid insecticides, explaining that they negatively affect honeybee queens by reducing survival, mating success, and reproductive quality. His studies showed that queens exposed to neonics mated with fewer drones and had impaired sperm counts, which may contribute to the queen-failure issues reported worldwide. He also noted unexpected physiological changes, such as enlarged ovaries in exposed queens, though the biological significance remains unclear. Williams emphasised that queen problems may not be the root cause but rather a symptom of broader stressors. He highlighted the importance of understanding brood presence throughout the year, especially in warmer climates where brood rarely stops. He encouraged beekeepers to stay closely connected to their colonies and adapt management practices accordingly. Williams also described the benefits of the U.S. land-grant university system and the need for stronger research and extension capacity in Australia. His overall message stressed the need for continued research collaboration and improved varroa-management strategies to address global bee health challenges.

AUS Honey Market

Jodie Goldsworthy provided an overview of the Australian honey market, emphasising the financial pressures beekeepers face alongside the challenges of varroa. She explained that Australia produces roughly 20,000 tonnes of honey while about one-third of the market is now filled by cheaper imported honey, which sets the retail floor price and forces major supermarkets to follow. Imported honey, often from countries linked to adulteration, creates a widening price gap that Australian producers cannot compete with at the low end. She highlighted that adulterated honey is now the world's most commonly adulterated food, with technology spreading to new exporting countries such as Vietnam and Thailand. Despite this, Australian consumers consistently rate local honey higher, showing they value quality, provenance, and trust over price alone. The speaker stressed the importance of premiumisation, storytelling, and brand building to lift returns for beekeepers. She also noted that large-scale marketing campaigns are extremely costly, meaning industry efforts must be strategic and targeted. The session closed with optimism, pointing to population growth, cultural shifts, and rising consumer interest in food origin as strong long-term opportunities for Australian honey.

President's Report

Greetings from LA – I'm finishing up a five-week trip which has included some beekeeping work. Firstly, a visit to Randy Oliver (Scientific Beekeeping) which was very informative and enjoyable. He has managed varroa in his hives such that a test we did had only one mite. He breeds queens that have a great temperament – no suits or gloves required at all. I have a report and pix to share at a later date. On to New Mexico to visit Amy and Matt from Desert Hives, I met them at Apimondia in Copenhagen last year. We spent a great day working their hives in 35 degree heat (dry, not humid) followed by an amazing meal at a local tavern. New Mexican cuisine is really good, especially if you like chilli. The same week, I visited TerraVera and spent several hours with them discussing and having a demonstration of their product for use in bee health and varroa control. At this stage ApiVera isn't available in Australia but negotiations are underway with a potential Australian distributor. I have a report to share on this visit.

On the home scene, there are still a lot of events coming up. St Benedict's Ecofiesta on 23 July, another Varroa Controller machine presentation in the Whitsundays on 25 July and a presentation at Burdekin Christian College on 29 July. We are slowly progressing with TCC on obtaining a lease over land in Hermit Park and submitting applications for grants for a number of projects.

Varroa is hitting many of our southern colleagues very badly, with lots of hives losses. Keep up inspections on your own hives and keep up with control and management techniques – it will eventually be detected here.

Committee Meeting Minutes.

Bohle Barn Meeting Room: 7 May 2026

Meeting Opened: 6.11 pm

Present: Frana McKinstry, Alan Cooney, Louise Clark, Doris Newitt (late), Ron Newitt, Mark Finn, Maria Finn, Beryl Smart, Jon McKinstry, Carla Lisle, Tatiana Stefanos, Blake Steward, Sharon Durham

Apologies: Liz Hennig, Lindsay Trott, Greg Skellern, John Carr

Minutes of Previous Meeting (19/3/26): Mover: Beryl Smart Seconded: Lou Clark

Treasurers Report: Mover: Sharon Durham Seconded: Tatiana Stefanos

Business from Previous Meeting:

- Reconciliation on # of computers, Cost of anti-virus protection – Finalised, 4 computers, \$66 per month.

- VARROA CONTROLLER WORKSHOP: Set dates, venue for next sessions – Tatiana looking at Ingham venue options.

- TRAINING SESSIONS: have asked Carla to submit a written proposal for discussion – ongoing.
- List of equipment available for loan/hire to be created and listed on the website under Resources - ongoing.
- Blue Cards - members should link existing cards to club, and/or apply for a card through the club's CCYPG portal - ongoing.
- Committee access to club email addresses - ongoing.
- Blake suggestion re replacing AI pix with local pix on website - ongoing.

Website Management: We will add a link button to take members directly to a Varroa Management page (under construction) and another to take beginners to a dedicated page – ongoing.

Upcoming Events: NQ Field Days – 250 jars of honey donated to Rotary for hampers Beef Expo – Jon & Frana attending, in Charters Towers EcoFiesta – planning is under way

QBA conference – mid June, need to send a rep or two.

Community requests: Receiving many requests, managing to attend as required.

Permanent Venue:

Kilcora Park is subject to flooding.

Bicentennial Park – discussion around this location, proposal has been submitted to TCC. Quotes provided for building of a shed, funding approved.

Grants Update: NQGP – submitted RRSF – approved DPI – ongoing GCBF – ongoing Bravus – submitted Elders – submitted RACQ – under way Qantas – submitted

Biosecurity Report: Varroa is slowly spreading. Some resistance to chemicals.

General Business:

- Shop – Ron advised that due to general & freight rising costs, we need to revise shop prices, approx. 10% across the board, rounding to 5/10. Email advice to all members.
- QBA Conference attendance – Agreed to have a rep from our club attend.
- NQV nomination & lunch – Several members will be attending the lunch and presentation.
- Regional meetings – Ingham venue – Tatiana will check the option, possibly Tyto Wetlands.
- Burdekin VC meeting (Sept?) – to be confirmed
- July Committee meeting (9/7) Frana away 15 June – 19 July
- BeeStar review – Jon gave a summary of the meeting with BeeStar representatives. A sample product is supposed to be coming our way.
- Queen rearing workshops – an idea for the future.

MEETING CLOSED 7.58PM

Norroa – another treatment for Varroa based on RNA

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-06-10/beekeepers-call-for-investment-in-varroa-mite-treatment-norroa/106779554?utm_source=abc_news_web&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_campaign=abc_news_web

New research from New Zealand has offered beekeepers an alternative to the existing suggested combination of acaricide pesticides and hive biosecurity measures to manage the pest. Victoria University of Wellington entomologist Phil Lester is part of a research team that has developed a biopesticide that makes the mites infertile.

Phil Lester says varroa mites in Australia are building their resistance to synthetic chemicals. He said the approach used double-stranded RNA to silence reproductive genes.

"What it does is it's a natural process that's involved in turning off a gene,"

"This one in particular, this gene works on the reproductive system of the mite, so it doesn't kill the mite ... it stops it from laying eggs within the hive. What this sort of product does is allow a different approach — one that there isn't any documented resistance to — that could be utilised or could be a key part of the toolkit for varroa control in Australia."

Professor Lester said it would stop the growth of varroa populations and was safe for use on all bees, but it could take up to two years to be available in Australia.

"The bees themselves live for just as long as they should do, much longer than they do if you don't treat them and just let varroa do its thing, parasitise and kill the bees," he said.

The biopesticide is administered through a sugar wash solution that is then spread around the hive by the bees. The research was funded in part by GreenLight Biosciences Inc, a United States company that produces the product, called Norroa, commercially.

NOTE: from President Frana – we have some sachets of Norroa on hand, hopefully it will soon be approved for use in Australia.

Varroa Controller Workshops and Demo – they are Free!!!!

Meetings to display the Controller will be held by TDBAI in the Ingham district, the Burdekin and Innisfail/Cairns area later this year. The focus of this meeting will be a presentation on and practical demonstration of the Varroa Controller machine. Other varroa management options will also be on display. The meeting is open to all interested people and is being advertised in the local paper.

Asian honeybee is established in [Far North Queensland, around the greater Cairns area, and as far south as Cardwell](#).

Asian honeybees detected in Brisbane

Asian honeybees can move long distances by 'hitchhiking' on vehicles and through freight and transport systems.

Early detection is essential to prevent Asian honeybee from establishing in new areas.

- You must not keep or move a live Asian honeybee.
- Check your vehicle, trailer, caravan or boat before travelling long distances.
- If you are in an area where Asian honeybee is established, contact a licensed pest control operator to remove any bees that are swarming or nesting on your property.
- If you suspect a new incursion of bees in an international airport or seaport, call the Australian Government on 1800 798 636.



Asian honeybees can be confused with European honeybees and other local native bees, which should not be destroyed—these bees are important for pollination and honey production.

About Asian honeybee

The Asian honeybee (*Apis cerana*) is a carrier of bee diseases and pests and is the natural host of the mite *Varroa jacobsoni*, which is a prohibited matter under the [Biosecurity Act 2014](#).

The Asian honey bee is native to South-East Asia. Although similar in appearance to the European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*), the Asian honey bee is smaller, has less hair and has pronounced black/brown and yellow stripes. Feral infestations of Asian honey bee could compete with other bees for resources.

Asian honey bee nests can be found in tree hollows, under eaves, in walls, under floorboards, and in letterboxes, cable reels, compost bins, and other urban locations.

Stay informed

- Contact us by [phone, online or in-person](#)
- [Asian honey bee | Business Queensland](#)

Check out where Varroa has spread to in Qld

Varroa surveillance map:

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/.../varr.../surveillance-map>

- Bee123 reporting:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/e7fb92e833744be7b2b32d25981779bf?portalUrl=https://qportal.information.qld.gov.au/arcgis>

- Varroa information:

<https://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/varroa>

Support is also available through Biosecurity Queensland and local beekeeping clubs.

Where to go for help or advice about Varroa

If you need assistance or have questions, you can reach the VMIRI team at: varroa@dpi.qld.gov.

Two of Queensland's former VDOs have taken on new roles within the VMIRI program and are also available to contact:

Sarah Hickman – Engagement Officer ☎ 0436 848 913 sarah.hickman@dpi.qld.gov.au

Tonia Johnson – Bee Biosecurity Officer (BBO) ☎ 0439 269 892 tonia.johnson@dpi.qld.gov.au
bee.biosecurity@dpi.qld.gov.au

Monitoring still matters. Please continue performing your alcohol washes and drone uncappings and remember to report results through the [Bee 123 form](#). Regular monitoring is one of the most important tools we have to detect varroa early and reduce its impact when it reaches North Queensland.

Currently, in Brisbane, many beekeepers — even those actively monitoring and treating — have experienced significant hive losses due to unmanaged or feral colonies around them. Early detection will continue to help us respond quickly and protect healthy hives before infestations escalate.

Thank you all for the support, conversations, and commitment you've shown throughout my time as VDO. Keep looking after yourselves, your bees, and stay connected with each other as we continue preparing for varroa in North Queensland.

Carla Lisle (Kersnovske)

Varroa destructor NOT YET in North Queensland

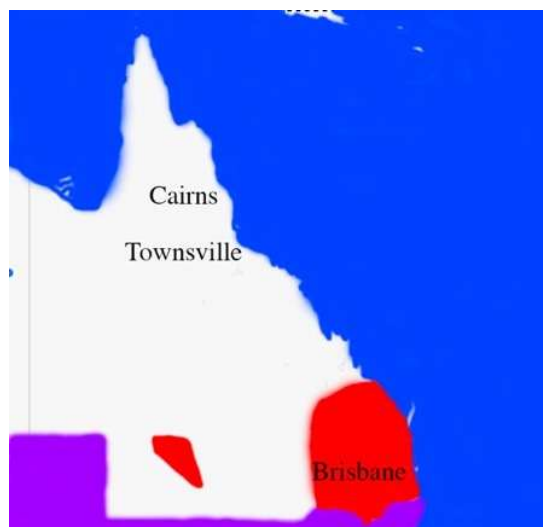
By Dr John Carr

We all expect the varroa infestations to move north and the west in Queensland, but this could take years.

The current state of infestation.

Approximate map of *Varroa destructor* infestation in June 2026 indicated by the red area

Any infestation map however is historical, as it only indicates when a hive is positive or negative according to (the honesty of) the viewer. The level of infestation is not significant as one hive can infest a new area. We also have little idea of the amount of infestation in wild hives.



Varroa destructor and *Varroa jacobsoni*

- A single Varroa is all it takes. The female (all the adults you see, are female) and the first born in the cell is the haploid male. He mates with his diploid female sisters and the cycle continues.
- Phoretic (adult free living mites) spread and bees can fly 10km around the hive when in search of nectar, so a total area could be 20km diameter, which is 300+ sq km. Normally they only fly 2-3km straight lined when food is plentiful.
- Varroa can wait on flowers for a new honey bee to pollinate and latch on, then they are taken to a new hive with the returning bee.
- Varroa are able to survive without food for 5 days.
- When bee hives swarm and naturally spread into the wild the varroa can spread with them. Small hive beetles do the same. A typical swarm moves 5km to a new hive. But in Western Australia it can be twice as far as the bees are desperate for resources and search for a farm (for instance) from afar.
- Wild *Apis mellifera* (European Honey bee) who have become infested will spread varroa by all the above methods. Note *A. mellifera* is not native to Australia but is an invited/invasive species.
- From Townsville up to the North, other pathogens as well as Varroa from *A. mellifera* could infect *Apis cerana* (Asian Honey Bee) which then can spread the pathogens further.
- Bee suit movement and equipment get to ride varroa to a new location.
- Movement of honey is a small risk for Varroa who would drown in the fluids. But it's a good way for some other pathogens to move.
- Human nature contributes to the spread of Varroa. Beekeepers will believe people who say "this hive is negative" and then get a queen, and attendants, for their hive. This is the most likely way it will quickly get to Townsville. If you are in an infected area people just do not see the Varroa. They are so small.

- Deliberate spread by beekeepers is also possible from those who want to believe they can improve the genes. “And what difference we are positive any way” they say. We have had two incursions this way and there could be more. Beekeepers and sellers should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law for flouting the regulations.

Figure 1 The ventral surface for *Varroa jacobsoni* and *Varroa destructor* (right)



Do not buy Queen bees and their attendants from areas with varroa. Irrespective of if they say they are negative.

Club Activities

Mentoring “Newbees” with Mark and Maria Finn

One of the important jobs of our bee club, and one which the club takes seriously, is the mentoring of new beekeepers. Our Club could step up to this opportunity a bit more.

Here is Maria and Mark Finn hosting a lovely couple they met at EcoFest (see pic on right) who are visiting from Italy and asked if they could have a look in a hive. Mark was very happy to show off his lovely bees.

Beekeeping can place a bit of pressure on our wallets and a time commitment as well, so giving potential beekeepers the opportunity to spend time with an experienced keeper prior to purchasing a hive is a very valuable service we can offer. See below for a pic of a show and tell with Maria and Mark



Blooper of the Month, or year?

How to kill a queen (9 at last count)

From Ray Berkelmans on the Gold Coast

By virtue of the number of deaths, or by the means inflicted on the poor queens, this sorry saga would have to be in contention for the 'World's greatest royal flush'— 8 dead queens in 6 weeks, all from just 4 hives!

Round 1

It all started in early May after 3 weeks of intensive vaping with oxalic acid (OA) to bring phoretic mite loads down from dangerous levels (i.e. around 27%!) to something a bit more reasonable (ideally <2%). I was vaping every 3 days through a hole in a shim, placed between the top of the brood frames and the excluder. I noticed from my hive scale data in early May that one of my hives had swarmed when I wasn't home. Five Kgs of bees gone, just like that, queen too! I checked out all 4 hives and found two more hives that were queenless. But these had not swarmed according to the weight data. The wisdom in the local club (GCABS – Gold Coast Amateur Beekeeping Society) is that it was not the OA that killed these queens, but that they were likely in the wrong spot at the wrong time during one of my vapes. Basically, they got a dose of steaming acid up their backsides!

So, that is now 3 queens down!

Lesson: Always smoke the hole before you vape!



New queen laying lots of drone brood.

Round 2

I ordered 3 new queens from a reputable breeder and installed them. I noticed that in two of my queenless hives, there were some queen cells. I knocked them off before placing the queen cages in the hives. Later that day I inspected the queen cells I knocked off and opened them up. I then found that one had an unborn queen inside, but the other two were empty with some jelly/feaces still visible. They had already hatched and somewhere I had virgin queens running around. That meant that at least two of my new queens were going to be rejected. I figured I would leave them to it. If my queens got killed and the home-hatched virgins survived and could take over, that was fine by me. Two weeks later, I checked up on them. If I found them alive and laying, then I had a successful queen introduction. Except they weren't laying worker brood. Both were laying drone brood only. The queens did not get mated properly!

So, that is 5 queens down!

Lesson: Always dissect any queen cells BEFORE installing a new queen!

Round 3

I ordered two more queens from the same breeder, admitting my embarrassment. They arrived the following week. I carefully went through every brood frame and satisfied myself there were no viable queen cells before installing the queens. I gave them 2 weeks before checking up on them. I found them both, alive and well, ... and laying masses of drone brood! These queens were also poorly mated! It was now halfway through June and clearly not a good time for mating queens. I contacted the breeder and he promised to send me two replacements.

So, that is 7 queens down!

Lesson: Winter is not a good time to be requeening!

Round 4

The two replacement queens arrived the following week. I went through the first hive, found the queen with the nice white dot and, lo and behold, there were at least 2 frames of worker brood. Still quite a lot of drone brood (maybe 40%?) but nothing like the week before. I left her alone in the hope she would continue to improve. The second hive was a mess with drone brood everywhere and no worker brood to be seen. I found the queen with the white dot and killed her. I placed the new queen cage in the brood area but kept the plug covering the candy on. I was hoping to give the hive an extra day or two to get used to this new queen before removing the plug.

Now I had a spare queen, which perhaps I might need in the next few weeks if the ex-drone layer didn't mend her old ways completely. I decided to make a nuc with her the next day. It was going to be a cold night so my brilliant idea was to keep her in my honey warmer overnight. I have a large esky that can take 2 honey pails which has an electric blanket in it and a controller to keep the honey at 30°C and stop it from candying. I placed the queen cage in and kept the esky lid ajar a few mm to let them breathe. The next morning, I



Queen and attendants killed with kindness ... or, at least thoughtlessness...after being kept in the honey warmer overnight

got dressed for the job at hand, opened the esky for the queen cage and, yep, the queen and her attendants were all dead. Gulp!

So, that is 8 queens down!

Lesson: Queens can stand cold conditions a lot better than warm conditions!

Final thought: Even after 15 years of beekeeping, there is still much to learn, ... for me at least!

Ed: A late update on Ray's queen saga. Ray detected a drop of at least 5 kg in the hive weight in a short space of time on one of his recently requeened hives (Ray runs his own designed and built wifi connected hive scale communication system). When he went out to check things that afternoon he found the swarm (and his new queen!!) way up a 10m gum tree in the backyard, but they were gone by next morning. Make that another queen in the lost/died/absconded tally – Now at 9.

Hive stands – custom built by Clubbie Craig

Hive stands made to order, image in the attachment:

<https://mcusercontent.com/3e58ed5f92f9006c61eab71e0/compressed/f2c71e79-93f7-b414-fda5-cd8dc73e21eb.jpg>

Size and shape can be modified to suit any base or hive size.

Phone number is 0422 537 980



News from the internet and around the hives

Benefits and downsides of queen excluders

<https://beeculture.com/minding-your-bees-and-cues/>

Ed: I found this a great record of the ins and outs of whether excluders influence hive performance and behaviour. Have a read and you will be much wiser about the potential pitfalls and obvious benefits. Apparently, they are great at excluding mice and other vermin from the honey supers. A taste test found a slight difference in palatability of excluder vs non excluder honey, with non-excluder the winner!,

- and what better use for a wire excluder could an Aussie beekeeper find than a BBQ grill?

Ukrainian beekeeper Petro Prokopovych (1775-1850) is credited with coming up with the idea of how to exclude brood from honey supers. Nice one Petro.



A creative use of a queen excluder is the BBQ grill set up. Photo credit: Dan Whitney

United Airlines flight bound for Cancun delayed over huge swarm of bees

https://apple.news/A1grUUlbKQxCIm_Xl3doq9A

The flight was delayed while airport workers figured out a way to encourage them to fly on their own. Some passengers were transferred to “beezness” class.



Leading USA Bee Research Lab getting bulldozed

<https://view.flodesk.com/emails/6a2c1d135acc11bb619ec4b6>

By: Barb Bloetscher

With 60 percent of commercial honey bee colonies dying in the last 3 years, and the likely threat of the *Tropilaelaps* mites and other damaging pests attacking our colonies in the US, it is alarming and dangerous to know that our Government is trying to close the USDA Research Labs in Beltsville MD. THIS INCLUDES the Honey Bee Diagnostic Lab and ALL the research that has continued to serve US since the 1920's!!!

The USDA Honey bee Diagnostic Laboratory has ID'd CCD, Disappearing Disease (before CCD), many of the viruses and pathogens that attack honey bees, and done extensive research to improve honey bee health and beekeeping management. The Diagnostic Lab has conducted Disease Diagnostics and Pest ID as well as antibiotic resistance at no cost to the public and provided additional diagnostics as needed for unusual submissions and questions.

It's not JUST the Bee Lab though, the facility includes research on Food, Agricultural crops, Farm animals, Fruit, Vegetables, Hay and silage, Soil nutrition and Ornamental plants. They provided insight on the emerald ash borer, many other invasive pests, plus Human Nutrition.

Acres of chestnut trees one year away from flowering have a resistance to a soil pathogen. If the Labs are closed, the buildings will be razed and the fields leveled.

You can't infect any soil with this pathogen and wait another 30 years for the chestnut trees to develop resistance again, yet the plan is to destroy these trees.

Although the admin is providing another location for the employees, relocation is not always possible for them, plus funding and equipment to continue their research may or may not be possible.

The Admin has already ordered dumpsters to empty the labs.

The employees have until Sept 1, to move out.

The buildings will be emptied by Sept 30.

Keep in mind that the Beltsville Labs serve the entire NE USA. Other USDA Labs do good work but they have different soils, environments, weather, and plants than we do here. Diseases and symptoms that occur in NE USA often do not occur in the arid SW or locations of other labs.

Worse of all is the loss of the Brain Trust, the Collaboration that occurs with these groups of employees. Together they found and tried all kinds of answers to difficult questions and helped us and our crops, animals and wildlife improve.

GREED and Ignorance is pushing this movement to close the labs and sell the property for "development".

From The Ed

Gigantic swarm absconds with hive boxes for use as prefab tiny home/hives

It came as a rude shock when a local beekeeper discovered his 2 backyard hives with around 30,000 bees each, had “flown the coop”, so to speak, only to find they had also taken the coops with them. Overnight, the girls had packed their bags and decided that while the accommodation was warm and cosy, the neighbourhood was not appealing any more. Why not just take the house with you, they thought. Lets go!
Must have been April 1!



Before and after photos



If the bees earned minimum wage,
then a jar of honey would cost
\$182,000



Posted on Facebook and sent in by Frana

Reminders: membership renewal are sent by email – now \$35/p.a.

Membership fees can be made electronically to:
Townsville and District Beekeepers
BSB: 633 000
Account: 141 466 078

Please make sure you add your Surname or subscription number so that your membership can be signed off.

Club Shop – now a shop, swap and stop – and sell

We will have a gazebo set up with new items on show and a **coffee machine**, so call in or stay on after collecting your order. A great opportunity to ask questions about your bees, or just to have a chat. We will also have a Buy Swap Sell table, not limited to beekeeping items. feel free to bring things along.

Shoppers – log onto the website and place your order there: Accounts\Shop
Alternatively you can place your orders via email shop@beesnorth.com.au Shop opening is first Saturday of the month

Location: 3/38 Rendle St, Aitkenvale

Time: 9am – 10:30am

Collection at other times by arrangement and when volunteers are available.

Email orders will be given priority and serviced – but walk in orders may be completed if time allows. Pre-order before midnight on the Thursday before shop opening time.

Email orders will be given priority and serviced – but walk in orders may be completed if time allows. Pre-order before midnight on the Thursday before shop opening time.



Welcome to our New Members

Existing Club Members are encouraged to assist/mentor our Newbees. They have joined the club to learn about bees, so even if you only have limited experience, give them a hand if you can. Invite a Newbee to your hive opening and discuss what's inside the box, let Newbees experience hive openings to become more confident, and you will learn more yourself by trying to explain what's going on in there.

When Bee Foundation

Keep up to date with the latest news and research from the When Bee Foundation which is an Australian not-for-profit charity that promotes awareness of the importance of bees for food security and raises funds for research. Their newsletter provides very informative industry updates as well as education on bees. Check out their page and subscribe to their newsletter [here](#)

Subscribe to the Bee Aware e-newsletter and stay up to date

The Bee Aware newsletter is an e-newsletter for beekeepers and growers of pollinator-reliant crops, or anyone else simply interested in beekeeping or the pollination of crops. Each newsletter contains the latest in news, research and development, as well as upcoming events relating to honey bee biosecurity and the pollination of horticultural and agricultural crops. Townsville features in Issue 52 due to the latest AHB and Varroa incursion. <https://beeaware.org.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

Native bee Newsletter – join the group and check out some great info and photos

The CROSS-POLLINATOR – Newsletter of the Australian Native Bee Association

Original articles, new information and news from the world of native bees. The Association has branches in Sydney, Brisbane, Wide Bay and Gladstone, but no Townsville branch?? Are there enough interested native beekeepers to get one “flying”?

Check out these sites:

<https://australiannativebee.org.au/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Australian.Native.Bee.Association/>

<https://www.instagram.com/australiannativebeeassociation/>



Invitation to potential speakers at Australian Native Bee Conference

Would you like to present your work and ideas? Then send us an Abstract.

Submissions close soon (15th February).

We're looking forward to a fantastic program of speakers spanning diverse topics, including:

- Native bee behaviour, ecology and physiology
- Pollination by native bees in crops and wild systems
- Stingless bee honey and other products
- Wild bee diversity, monitoring and conservation
- Stingless bee management and hive propagation
- Native bees in education and community engagement
- Regional spotlight: Native bees of North Queensland

Conference details are [here](#), including information on [abstract submissions](#) and registration.

Schedule

- Abstract submissions close 15th Feb 2026
- Speakers notified: 15th March
- Speakers confirm by: 30th March
- Speaker biography and images due: 30th June

Please share this reminder with others you think may be interested in attending as speakers.

Any questions or queries, please reach out to [me](#).

Kind Regards,

Ros Gloag (Chair of the Organising Committee)



TDBAI Committee is involved in many activities – can you lend a hand?

Contact any of the Committee Members to find out how to get involved

TDBAI Office holders and Committee for 2025/2026

Position	Name	Contact
President	Frana McKinstry	president@beesnorth.com.au
Vice President	Al Cooney	
Secretary	Doris Newitt	secretary@beesnorth.com.au
Treasurer	Louise Clark	treasurer@beesnorth.com.au
Event Co-Ordinator	vacant	
Biosecurity Awareness Officer	John Carr	
Newsletter Editor	Lindsay Trott	editor@beesnorth.com.au
Assistant Editor	Lesley Barr	
Membership Officer	Frana McKinstry	membership@beesnorth.com.au
Shop Managers	Ron Newitt & Mark Finn	shop@beesnorth.com.au
Shop Assistant	N/A	
Librarian	Beryl Smart	
Website	vacant	
Native Bees Representative	Jon McKinstry	
Committee 1	Maria Finn	
Committee 2	Greg Skellern	
Committee 3	Carla Kersnovske	
Committee 4	Blake Steward	
Committee 5	Liz Hennig	
Committee 6	Sharon Durham	
Committee 7	Tatiana Stefanos	

Editor needs your input – why not tell me your story?

Club Member Profile Questionnaire

Send stories and pictures to :

Lindsay Trott: trottlindsay@gmail.com Or: Lesley Barr <lesleybarr@y7mail.com>

Name /HIN /Suburb /Native or/and European bees /No of hives/area of hive locations? Type of hives? / Type of foundation? /Beetle protection?

Year commenced beekeeping?

Who was your mentor?

Who is involved in your household?

Is anyone allergic/sensitive to stings?

What has been your biggest success? / failure?/ mistake?/ biggest lesson?

What would you do differently if you had to start beekeeping again after a disaster like fire/ AFB /Varroa /cyclone

Do you sell/barter/give away honey?

How much honey does your average hive produce?

Do you make any other products from your hives?

Do you volunteer for the Club at Open days, markets, school events, public displays?

Would you like to participate? Any stories you would like to tell? Attach photo please?

That's it!!!!

Just fill it out and send it to me, and you will be a rock star in the Monthly Newsletter.

Please provide more than just a one word answer!! Cheers The Ed.

Blooper of the Month?

Send me your blooper for totally anonymous recognition- honestly